

Memorial For Stephen Rosenholtz

January 24, 2026

Sadie and Morris Rosenholtz



Sadie and Morris's five children:
Joe, Ruth, Bill, Irv, and Sid



Bill with saxophone



Bill and Florence



Susie and Steve, 3 ½ years old



The Rosenholtzes in Tijuana, 1955



Steve and friends in Mexico



Susie and Steve's B'nai
Mitzvah



Susie and Steve's B'nai Mitzvah



Susie and Steve collaborate

CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION AND THE PERCEPTION OF ABILITY*

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In this paper we test the idea that organization of classroom instruction shapes student and teacher perceptions of ability by offering or constricting opportunities to construct performance interpretations. We identify a cluster of instructional characteristics hypothesized to produce variation in perceived ability stratification and in the relative influence of classroom actors' evaluations upon each other in the formation of ability perceptions.

Comparing classroom actors who were surveyed from seven "multidimensional" and eight "unidimensional" instructional organizations, we find significant differences in the dispersion of ability evaluations by teacher, classmates and self. Further, the relative influence of teacher evaluations on classmates' perceptions and teacher and classmates' evaluations on self perception in part depends upon the organization of instruction.

Self-evaluation of ability, a term used to refer to a person's image of their own capabilities, has frequently been found to be related to various dimensions of

classroom organization. The pattern of these findings, however, is inconsistent and often contradictory. When homogeneous and heterogeneous grouping practices within classrooms are compared, for example, some studies find no difference in students' self-evaluation; some studies find homogeneous grouping enhances self-evaluation; and some studies find the opposite (for reviews, see Gallager and Ragge, 1966; Passow, 1962). Comparing the effects of open and traditional classrooms on self-perception, a similarly inconclusive pattern of results is reported (Horwitz, 1979).

The inconsistency in results, we believe, is part of a single underlying problem: for most classroom effects studies, there is no convincing theory to support

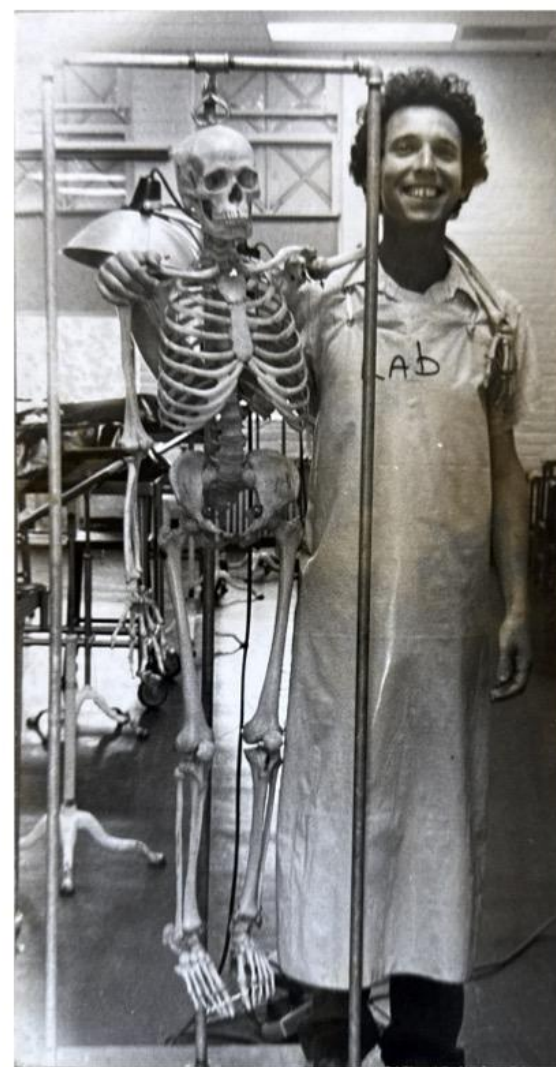
* This paper was written while the first author was a NIMH Post-doctoral Scholar in the Department of Sociology, Stanford University (Grant No. 5-T32-MH14243-04). The authors thank Joan Talbert for her assistance with the data analysis, and Carl Simpson and an anonymous reviewer for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of this manuscript. Address correspondence to Dr. Susan J. Rosenholtz, Department of Sociology, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This and the preceding paper were submitted and reviewed independently. However, because of their obvious relevance to each other, the authors were informed of the coincidence, and the final versions of the papers have thus taken their joint publication into account.

Steve with Moshe
Feldenkrais



Steve and a friend



Steve and family at
Shaull's wedding, 2015



Steve and Betty



Steve's *Move Like the Animals* in five languages



Steve's *Move Like the Animals* in five languages

Steve: "I'm not afraid to make mistakes, so I can learn anything."



Closing Comments (1)

Thank you for being here, in person or by zoom; thank you for speaking, and thank you for being part of Steve's life.

I also want to thank Bob Bachrach for hosting this memorial and doing so much to make it happen.

Closing Comments (2)

I want to close with words by Walt Whitman, from the end of his *Song of Myself*:

I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass I love,
If you want me again look for me under your boot-soles.

You will hardly know who I am or what I mean,
But I shall be good health to you nevertheless,
And filter and fibre your blood.

Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged,
Missing me one place search another,
I stop somewhere waiting for you.